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Statement by the spokesman of the Portuguese Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Recent sentences against East Timorese civilians strike again an ominous contrast with the leniency shown towards the Indonesian military brought to trial for their involvement in the 12 November massacre

Two more East Timorese civilians, whose trials in Dili have now finished, have been given heavy prison sentences for non violent activities in connection with the massacre committed on 12 November 1991 by Indonesian military in the capital of the non-self governing territory of East Timor, illegally occupied by Indonesia.

Juvencio de Jesus Martins and Felismino da Silva Pereira were condemned respectively to six years and five years and eight months in prison, for their alleged participation in organizing the demonstration that was, on that occasion, barbarously repressed by Indonesian troops causing heavy human losses, as was widely reported.

In the meanwhile, and according to what has been publicly disclosed, several low-ranking Indonesian military (two second-lieutenants, one sergeant and three privates - these three, curiously enough, all of East Timorese origin), were court-martialled and given sentences of between eight and eighteen months inprisonment.

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The charges brought against them (disobeying orders and inflicting wounds with a bayonet) are clear indicators that a serious investigation into those actually responsible for an atrocity that prompted worldwide indignation is still far from sight. Who ordered the shooting at the Santa Cruz cemetery? who are those accountable for so many killed and wounded? These questions remain unanswered in in spite of all the promises subsequently made by the Indonesian authorities.

Indonesia committed itself to identifying and punishing all those deemed responsible for that tragedy. So far its understanding of that commitment has lead it to inflict heavy penalties such as those referred to above upon East Timorese, indicted not for any violent activities, but with organizing peaceful demonstrations. There is a shocking and unacceptable discrepancy between those penalties and those imposed on the military (small fry as they may be) who took part in that terrible brutality.

Indonesia continues to blatantly disregard the commitments it gave in subscribing to the consensus agreed upon by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, as announced by the declaration of its Chairman, on 4 March 1992.

Not only has the punishment of the authors of that carnage been translated into ludicrous measures: those civilians whose release without delay was requested by the Human Rights Commission have been sentenced.

This shows that the Indonesian Government acted with complete cynicism in the UN Human Rights Commission's dealings with this issue. It also shows Indonesia's contempt for human rights.

Portugal expresses its firmest condemnation of these actions and hopes that the international community will draw from them

the appropriate conclusions. Portugal affirms also its full solidarity with all those East Timorese who have been sentenced to unjust and illegitimate penalties aimed at repressing their struggle to ensure that the people of East Timor have the freedom to choose their political future.

Lisbon, 22 June 1992